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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further action and initiatives: women's human rights and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Statement submitted by the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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The World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, representing 22 women's organizations in 12 countries, has been involved for many years in the promotion of human rights, especially for women and children. We are deeply concerned about all causes of violence against women, particularly in Eastern Europe. Despite the efforts to effect change after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, appear to be on the rise.

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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Domestic violence against women of all ages

- Is an expression of fundamental gender inequality,
- Perpetuates both violent physical behaviour against women and the attitudes which promote it,
- Acts as a precedent, setting behavioural patterns for children, i.e., future generations.

The great breadth of this physical and mental abuse transcends all social boundaries and distinctions, from poverty to wealth, from illiteracy to higher academic education, and exists under all political systems. Attitudes which promote gender inequality encourage physical and psychological domination of women and children inside the home and out, promote abusive sociopathic conditions, such as trafficking of women and children, and promote women's economic and political inequality worldwide. The necessary reform of behaviour and attitudes that are often perpetuated by traditional sociocultural patterns threatens well-established relationships and is ignored or resisted. In Eastern Europe, recent efforts towards democratization have begun to address women's issues, but the fundamental inequality is starkly demonstrated in the continuation of domestic violence and in its broadest public expression: the abduction, deception, coercion, selling and even killing of women by traffickers.

Domestic violence against women is unacceptable and we request that all Governments establish enforceable, as well as simple guideline policies of zero tolerance on this pernicious form of human rights abuse. Elimination of domestic abuse of women in the home will have the ancillary benefit of improving the treatment of women outside the home and, more importantly, will provide appropriate behaviour models for the next generation.

In order to effect change in attitudes towards women on a global scale, Governments must take a more proactive role

- In providing and supporting educational programmes for adults against domestic violence,
- Offering training for police, legal workers, health-care workers and others, and, most importantly,
- Educating children worldwide in the concepts of human rights, gender equality and causes of domestic violence.

We, as well as Soroptimist International and the International Federation of Home Economics, supporting non-governmental organizations, appeal to all Governments to take definitive action to stop violence against women.